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Construction for Sümela Monastery cable car project to start in March



Construction works for a cable car planned to be built in the area where the historic Sümela Monastery in Turkey's Black Sea province of Trabzon's Maçka district is will start in March, authorities have announced. Companies will tender for the project on Feb. 19, Trabzon Mayor Orhan Fevzi Gümrükçüoğlu has said.

The planned cable car will operate between three stations and will cover a distance of 2.5 kilometers. The project aims to provide an easy access to the historical monastery, which is visited by around 700,000 people every year.

Maçka Mayor Koray Koçan has said the planned cable car project will lead to a further increase in the number of tourists visiting Sümela Monastery, perched on a scenic cliff facing the Altındere Valley.

"The cable car will consist of three stations: One of them at the door entrance, the other where the recreational facilities are, and the final one is in the observation area…The people that will get on this cable car will not only see the monastery but also the natural beauties at the waterfalls and forestry at the Altındere Valley National Park overlooking the monastery. I believe that several tourists will come

just to get on the cable car. The Sümela Monastery had lastly seen 700,000 tourists [a year before it was closed for restoration]. I believe that we will double this figure with the cable car. We'll reach a number around 1.5-2 million," Koçan said.

Sümela Monastery was closed to tourists in 2015 for a restoration process that aimed to address the danger caused by the rock masses around Karadağ Mountain where it is located. Restoration works have also been ongoing inside the historical monastery. Once opened to tourists, which is expected sometime this year, the monastery's unknown parts, including chapels, will be opened for visits.

The Sümela Monastery is a Greek Orthodox monastery. It also has a very significant place in the history of art. It is believed that the monastery was constructed in the 4th century, although Alexios III (1349 – 1390) can be named as the real founder.

It is inside the Altındere National Park, surrounded by a beautiful forest, and at the bottom of the mountain flows one of the arms of Değirmendere Creek.

The vehicles can reach up to the parking lot at 950 meters height near the river, and from that point one needs to hike uphill through the path way approximately 1 km to reach the entrance of the monastery, which is located 1,200 meters above sea level.

(Source: hurriyetdailynews.com)